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This paper investigated whom the students at two military junior colleges in Missouri asked for counsel with questions on (1) a present academic situation, (2) their future education, (3) their future vocation, and (4) a personal problem. It was hypothesized that there would be no significant difference in their choice of advisor for the four problems. Eighty-three students in the psychology classes answered questionnaires on which, for the four problems, they made first-to-third choices among eight possible counselors--advisor, chaplain, counselor, commandant, dean, friend, teacher, and other. If the choice were "other," they were asked to explain their reason. A Chi-square test showed a significant difference in the selections, except in the third choices allowed concerning future education and vocation. The hypotheses were therefore rejected. The main findings were that the cadets would (1) seek out the teacher to solve a present academic problem, (2) look to the counselor to answer future educational and vocational questions, and (3) discuss personal problems with a friend. Although the counselor's role in vocational and educational matters had long been accepted, the author found it surprising how few cadets would turn to him for personal advice. This suggests that some counselor training be provided for all personnel working with students. (HH)

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# PERCEPTIONS OF THE COUNSELING ROLE IN THE MILITARY JUNIOR COLLEGES IN MISSOURI

Albert Erb

Identification of roles must be established within an institution. If the institution exists for the students, their perceptions of any role are important. This project deals with the counseling role in the military junior colleges.

The purpose of the military junior college is to provide the first two years of college education above and beyond the secondary school level in an atmosphere of close and careful personal attention to individual problems, while at the same time extending the added advantages of physical and military training. They offer liberal arts, pre-engineering, pre-law, pre-medicine, pre-business administration and give special attention to students seeking admissions to the service academies--West Point, Annapolis, and U.S.A.F. Academy.

The military junior colleges are accredited by their regional as well as state agencies. This means that their courses are acceptable to any four-year college, and full credit is given for them to transfer, provided the graduate is recommended for transfer and accepted by the college or university.

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These schools give careful guidance to the students throughout the course of study. There is constant close personal contact between the cadet and his instructors; thus opportunity is afforded for more extra help and advice than would be practicable in larger institutions (Tucker, 1958).

Formal counseling by a certified counselor is offered to each cadet in these institutions. These counselors stress vocational and educational counseling but also offer social and emotional counseling as well.

Jensen (1955) points out that in almost any school system one is likely to hear comments like:

> "Students will go to teachers for help just as much as they will go to counselors.
> Parents can do a better job of counseling their children than counselors.
> Students get more help from talking with their friends than from talking with counselors (p. 500)."

His study indicated that as individuals to whom students might go for help, students preferred counselors over others when the problems were concerned with discovering and making progress toward realistically chosen while-in-school and after-school goals. Students looked most often to counselors for help in these areas

of adjustment.

Teachers received their strongest vote from students for help with problems related to making progress in school. Counselors seemed more strongly identified as help agents in matters related to discovering and progressing toward realistically chosen school and work goals.

Students seemed to prefer going to friends their own age for help in learning how to get along better with their friends and others at school, at home, and in the community.

A study by Grant (1954), done in the public schools in New York State, pointed out that high school students talked with the counselor 62% of the time when they had a question concerning their future education. The students talked with the counselor 50% of the time when concerned with a vocational question. The study further pointed out that out-of-school people were used 75% of the time when the students had a question involving a personal-emotional problem, while the counselor was used 4% of the time.

The purpose of this project and paper is to point out who the cadets perceive as fulfilling the counseling role should they be concerned with: 1) a question about a present academic situation, 2) a question about their

future education, 3) a question about their future vocation, and 4) a question about a personal problem.

It is by no means the intention of this paper to evaluate or compare the military junior colleges in Missouri.

For the purpose of this study the following hypotheses were formulated:

1. There is no significant difference in the cadets' choice of whom they would choose to discuss a present academic problem.

2. There is no significant difference in the cadets' choice of whom they would choose to discuss their future education.

3. There is no significant difference in the cadets' choice of whom they would choose to discuss their future vocation.

4. There is no significant difference in the cadets' choice of whom they would choose to discuss a personal problem.

## Method

This research was done at the military junior colleges in Missouri. These are Kemper Military School and College in Boonville, and Wentworth Military Academy in Lexington.

The following questionnaire was given to a total

of eighty-three junior college students who were enrolled in psychology classes in both colleges.

1. If you had a question concerning an academic problem in any course or subject, who, here at the college, would you talk with?

First choice_____

Second choice_____

Third choice_____

2. If you had a question concerning your future education, who, here at the college, would you talk with?

First choice_____

Second choice_____

Third choice_____

3. If you had a question concerning your future vocation, who, here at the college, would you talk with?

First choice_____

Second choice_____

Third choice_____

4. If you had a question concerning a personal problem, such as family difficulties, girl problems, feelings of anxiety, etc., who, here at the college would you talk with?

First choice_____

Second choice_____

Third choice_____

The cadets were instructed that possible choices were: Advisor, Chaplain, Commandant, Counselor, Dean, Friend, Teacher, or Other. They were asked to write an explanation if their choice was "other."

It should be pointed out that the two military junior colleges are similar in many ways. Each assigns advisors to a specific number of cadets; each college employs the services of a chaplain; each employs a counselor; each has a commandant who is in charge of the discipline in the school; each college has only one dean and he serves as an academic dean.

## Results

Table 1 presents data in percentages of choice.

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Insert Table 1 about here

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The data in Table 1 indicate that the teacher would be the person sought if a cadet were to be faced with a present academic problem.

The counselor was seen as fulfilling the counseling role if cadets should be concerned with a question involving their future education or vocation.

Friends would be the first choice of the cadets should they be confronted with a personal problem.

It appears that after the cadet has seen his friend when faced with a personal problem, there is no definite trend for the second or third choices. The

chaplain was perceived by a noticeable percentage of cadets as fulfilling a counseling role in this area.

The dean is seen in the counseling role should the cadet be faced with a present academic, future educational, or future vocational problem.

The commandant, who is in charge of discipline, would be seen by the cadets more for personal problems than for any of the other reasons.

The advisors would be sought more to discuss educational and vocational questions than for either the present academic or personal problems.

Table 2 shows a chi square analysis of choices.

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Insert Table 2 about here

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A chi square test of goodness of fit shows that there is a significant difference in choices of cadets. The only exceptions are the third choices of both future educational and future vocational questions. Therefore, all hypotheses are rejected.

## Discussion

It is clear that cadets involved in this study have definite ideas about to whom they would first turn if confronted with any of the questions in the study. It is evident that they would first seek the teacher if faced with present academic problems. They would

look to the counselor a greater percentage of time should they be faced with a question concerning their future education or vocation. More than half of the time, the cadets in the study would first seek a friend should they wish to discuss a personal problem.

The study indicates that counseling is done by many people in the environment of a military junior college. One could conjecture that if this should be true of the population, consideration should be given to some counselor training for all personnel working with students.

It is conceded that counselors have been perceived as educational and vocational counselors for a considerable length of time. The infrequency with which the counselors were perceived by the cadets as the person with whom one would discuss a personal problem is surprising.

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TABLE 1

Cadets' choices of person with whom they would discuss problem or question given as a percentage.

| | Present academic problem | | | Future educational question | | | Future vocational question | | | Present personal problem | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | choice | | | choice | | | choice | | | choice | | |
| | 1st | 2nd | 3rd | 1st | 2nd | 3rd | 1st | 2nd | 3rd | 1st | 2nd | 3rd |
| Advisor | 3.6 | 18.1 | 16.9 | 19.3 | 18.1 | 18.1 | 14.5 | 18.1 | 21.7 | 1.2 | 8.4 | 8.4 |
| Chaplain | 0 | 0 | 1.2 | 0 | 0 | 1.2 | 2.4 | 1.2 | 0 | 21.7 | 18.1 | 18.1 |
| Commandant | 0 | 0 | 1.2 | 0 | 1.2 | 1.2 | 2.4 | 1.2 | 1.2 | 6.0 | 15.7 | 14.5 |
| Counselor | 9.6 | 24.1 | 22.9 | 39.8 | 25.3 | 10.9 | 30.1 | 30.1 | 13.3 | 1.2 | 4.8 | 7.2 |
| Dean | 14.5 | 25.3 | 33.7 | 14.5 | 24.1 | 24.1 | 7.2 | 21.7 | 15.7 | 0 | 1.2 | 2.4 |
| Friend | 12.1 | 3.6 | 9.6 | 9.6 | 6.0 | 16.9 | 9.6 | 8.4 | 20.5 | 54.2 | 15.7 | 15.7 |
| Teacher | 56.6 | 21.7 | 9.6 | 12.1 | 19.3 | 16.9 | 21.7 | 10.8 | 16.9 | 2.4 | 16.9 | 7.2 |
| Other | 3.6 | 7.2 | 4.8 | 4.8 | 6.0 | 10.8 | 12.1 | 8.4 | 10.8 | 13.3 | 19.3 | 26.5 |

TABLE 2

Chi square analysis of the relationship between choice and problem.

| | Present academic problem | | Future educational question | | Future vocational question | | Present personal problem | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Choice | df | $X^2$ | df | $X^2$ | df | $X^2$ | df | $X^2$ |
| 1st | 5 | 100.28* | 5 | 37.66* | 5 | 18.47* | 7 | 147.62* |
| 2nd | 5 | 21.63* | 5 | 19.08* | 5 | 19.70* | 7 | 21.18* |
| 3rd | 5 | 29.18* | 5 | 7.12 | 5 | 4.31 | 7 | 27.55* |

*$p < .01$